

Appln. No.: 10/015,469
Amdt. Dated August 16, 2005
Reply to Office Action dated July 12, 2005

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claims 1, 3-4, 6-13 and 16 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Alden, U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0072469.

The Examiner stated the following in pages 2-3 of the July 12, 2005 Final Rejection:
"As per claim 1, Alden discloses an incoming mail monitoring system, said system comprises (abstract); one or more data bases that stores unique information affixed to mail and identities of mailers (database storing information) (abstract, paragraph 17, fig's. [sic] 3-9); a plurality of receptacles that reads and stores the unique information affixed to mail after the mail enters the interior of the receptacle (storing information) (abstract, paragraph 17, fig's. [sic] 3-9); a data center that stores the unique information affixed to mail and receives the unique information from the receptacles to determine if the mailer is permitted to enter mail in the receptacle (storing information) (abstract, paragraph 17, fig's. [sic] 3-9); and means coupled to the data center and the recipient of the mail for communicating to the recipient, information stored in the data center above the mail (transfer of data) (abstract, Paragraph 17, fig's.3-9)."

Alden discloses the following in his abstract:

"In a preferred embodiment, a network-based hardcopy mail scanning system to enable a mail recipient to view virtual images of their mail prior to physically receiving said mail. Unwanted mail from unknown origins can be discarded remotely by the mail recipient prior to actually receiving or touching the hardcopy mail. Thus the mail recipient is insulated from contact with potential letter bombs, biological agents, and chemical agents distributed by terrorists through the US or international postal systems. The process includes a means to digitize an image of hardcopy mail intended for a mail recipient, a database to store the digitized image, a scanning service computer connected to

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said database. Said scanning service computer and a mail recipient computer are interconnected by a computer network. The scanning service computer communicates images of hardcopy mail (addressed for delivery to the mail recipient) to the mail recipient computer via the computer network. The mail recipient can elect to accept mail for receipt or to reject mail which is then destroyed. By virtually selecting

what mail to accept and discarding the rest, the recipient can discard mail from unknown origins prior to ever physically handling it."

Paragraph 17 of Alden reads as follows:

"[0017] FIG. 3 is a flowchart describing hardcopy mail interception at the home mailbox of the present invention. The present invention provides a mail scan service 49. In this illustration, the mail scan service is intercepting the intended recipient's 55 mail at his home mail box 47. The 49 scans (records a digital image) of the mail which it provides electronically over the internet, thereby enabling the intended recipient to virtually view the mail prior to receiving it. Internet communication channel between 49 and 55 is indicated by a dotted line. The 55 elects to accept or to reject each specific mail article. Rejected mail 51 is discarded by the 49 and accepted mail 53 is routed to the user by the 49. Thus the user of the scanning service receives and personally handles only the mail that he wishes to and discards the unwanted mail without ever having handled it. This reduces potential for exposure to explosives, biological agents, and chemical agents distributed by terrorists.

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Alden does not disclose a postal indicia. In fact, in Fig. 9, Alden shows what appears to be a cancelled 34 cents U.S. postage stamp in the upper right hand side of the image of envelope 175. Thus, Alden does not disclose or anticipate, the following element or claim 1

namely, one or more data bases that stores unique information contained in a postal indicia affixed to mail and identities of mailers. Alden also does not disclose the following elements or claim 1 namely, a plurality of receptacles that reads and stores the unique information affixed to the mail after the mail enters the interior of the receptacle and a data center that stores the unique information from the receptacles to determine if the mailer is permitted to enter mail in the receptacle.

Claims 2 and 14-15 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Alden, U.S. patent application publication 2003/0072469 as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Bobrow, et al., U.S. patent application publication 2002/0079371.

The Examiner stated in page 5 of the July 12, 2005 Final Rejection: "*Bobrow et al. discloses wherein the means comprises: a telephone; and a voice response unit that is coupled to the telephone and the data center (paragraph 12, fig. 1). It would have been obvious to modify Alden to include a telephone, and a voice response unit that is coupled to the telephone and the data center such as that taught by Bobrow et al. in order to communicate [sic] with the data center through voice activated means concerning the incoming mail pieces. As per claim 14, Bobrow et al. further discloses wherein the receptacles includes the **time** and **date** that the mail was deposited in the receptacle (paragraph 133, fig's [sic] 2 & 4).*"

Paragraph 12 of Bobrow reads as follows:

"[0012] Despite promises of cross-platform integration (e.g., computer and telephone, computer telephony), there is usually little relationship between the data on a personal computer and most of the documents and other tools used for communication and information exchange that are found around a typical individual, office, or family. For example, in

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a typical home or office, one might find a telephone, an answering machine (or voicemail system), audio equipment (such as a stereo), a fax machine, a television, a computer and printer, a whiteboard or a chalkboard, and various written notes, lists, calendars, mailings, books, and other documents. Unfortunately, the information in one or more of those repositories is usually tied to that repository. For example, addresses in a written address book are not easily used on a computer e-mail system, unless the user goes to the trouble of manually transferring the relevant information from the address book to the computer."

Paragraph 133 of Bobrow reads as follows:

"[0133] Swipes **1114**, **1116**, and **1118** specify the date and time of the event. Swipes **1110**, **1112**, **1122**, and **1124** serve to annotate the event. The address is set forth in swipes **1120**, **1122**, and **1124** – this information can remain part of the annotation or can be extracted by the system as described below. Note that this further information can be displayed in a hierarchical fashion, concealing details until needed. Moreover, in one embodiment of the invention, the entire announcement of **FIG. 11** (or at least an additional portion thereof) is scanned and stored as an image in the database **310 (FIG. 3)** in addition to the information extracted and used as an event annotation as set forth above. This approach has the advantage that additional information in the document (such as the bride's name, for example) is accessible and can be made available, if necessary, even if it is not expected to be needed at the time the key data items are extracted."

Alden discloses the following in paragraph 20:

" Fig. 6 is a flowchart describing hardcopy mail scanning performed by an office mail processing system. Many buildings use internal mailroom personnel to distribute mail

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Through out the building, the present invention can be used at the building level as well. After the postal service 93 delivers mail to office mail processing system 95 the office mail service provides a mail scanning service (digital images of the mail are created). An intended receiver 105 is given access to the digital images via the intranet (indicated with dotted line) which interconnects the 97 computer and the 105 computer. Also over the intranet, the 105 sends elections to accept or reject each mail article to the 97 computer. The office mail processing system then delivers the only the accepted mail to the 105 and discards the rejected mail. Thus the user of the office mail scanning service receives and personally handles only the mail that he wishes to and discards the unwanted mail without ever having handled it. This reduces potential for exposure to explosives, biological agents, and chemical agents distributed by terrorists."

Alden's mail processing 95 is used after the postal service delivers mail to a building so that other users of the mail scanning service receives and personally handles only the mail he or she wishes to and discards the unwanted mail without ever handling it. In the invention claimed by Applicants in Claim 1 and those claims dependent thereon the receptacles are located at the point where the mailer enters the mail into the postal system and data is used to determine if the mailer is permitted to enter mail in the receptacle. Thus, Applicants claimed invention is able to access the likelihood that the mail containing life harming material is determined before the mail is delivered. Thus, The post may be able to remove mail from the mail stream at its entry point to the mail stream before it causes human harm and/or causes extensive property damage. Hence, neither Alden nor Bobrow taken separately or together discloses or anticipates the invention claimed by Applicant.

Claims 17 – 18 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Alden U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0072469 as applied to the claim 1 above and further in view of Ananda U.S. Patent No. 6,385,731.

The cited references do not disclose or anticipate the invention claimed in claim 1 as amended.

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Claim 1 is provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 -7 of copending Application No. 09/683380 and over claims 1-8 of copending Application No. 09/683381. A Terminal Disclaimer was filed in this Application on May 13, 2005 to overcome the double patenting rejection. (A copy of the Terminal Disclaimer is attached hereto). Note Serial numbers 09/683380 and 09/683381 appear near the bottom of the page next to and *.

In view of the above, claims 1-18 are patentable. If the Examiner has any questions, would he please call the undersigned at the telephone number noted below.

Respectfully submitted,



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